

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 TRSE-00 MCT-01

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-----070114 102235Z /62

R 101157Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7816

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PORG, TS

SUBJ: ARAB LEAGUE INFORMATION MINISTERS HOLD MEETING IN TUNIS

REF: CAIRO 12855

1. SUMMARY: ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL OF INFORMATION MINISTERS HELD ITS 13TH SESSION IN TUNIS ON AUGUST 1 AND 2. SESSION WAS NOTEWORTHY SOLELY FOR ITS APPROVAL OF A DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ARAB JOURNALISM AND FOR BRIEF VERBAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN LIBYAN AND EGYPTIAN PARTICIPANTS. COUNCIL PASSED RESOLUTIONS SUPPORTING LIBERATION STRUGGLES IN ERITREA AND WESTERN SOMALIA AGAINST "TERRORIST REGIME" OF ETHIOPIA AND CALLED FOR PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN ON ARAB DETAINEES IN ISRAELI PRISONS AND FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION TOYATEGY FOR LATIN AMERICA. END SUMMARY

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2. THE ARAB LEAGUE'S COUNCIL OF INFORMATION MINISTERS HELD ITS 13TH SESSION IN TUNIS FROM AUGUST 1 TO 2. SEVERAL RESOLUTIONS WERE PASSED CONCERNING INFORMATION AFFAIRS AND CAUSES DEAR TO ARAB LEAGUE. THE MINISTERS TOOK NOTE OF SITUATION IN WESTERN SOMALIA AND ERITREA AND THE "ACTS OF BARBARITY" BY ETHIOPIA AND EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION STRUGGLES AGAINST THE "TERRORIST REGIME" OF ETHIOPIA. THE MINISTERS ALSO DECIDED

TO UNDERTAKE A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN ON BEHALF OF ARABS HELD IN ISRAELI PRISONS AND TO DEVELOP AN INFORMATION STRATEGY TO DENIGRATE THE MANEUVERS OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. THE MINISTERS ALSO DECIDED TO DEVELOP AN INFORMATION STREGY FOR LATIN AMERICA AND TO SPONSOR A CONFERENCE IN SPAIN ON THE "ARAB HERITAGE OF ANDALUCIA."

3. MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTION OF INFORMATION MINISTERS WAS APPROVAL OF A DRAFT CODE OF HONOR FOR ARAB JOURNALISM AND REFERRAL OF THIS DRAFT TO ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION. DRAFT CODE CONTAINS MANY GEMS, INCLUDING FULL SUPPORT FOR LIBERTY OF EXPRESSION, ADHERENCE TO ARAB SOLIDARITY AND RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF MAN WHILE CONTAINING INJUNCTIONS AGAINST CAMPAIGNS OF DEFAMATION OF CHARACTER, CROOKED METHODS HOSTILE TO THE DIGNITY OF PEOPLE AND INSULTS TO CHIEFS OF STATE. CODE ALSO URGES JOURNALISTS TO PROTECT THE PURITY AND BEAUTY OF THE ARAB LANGUAGE AGAINST DIALECTICAL DEFORMATIONS AND FOREIGN LINGUISTIC INTRUSIONS. WE ARE POUCHING ARABIC AND FRENCH VERSIONS OF THIS DRAFT CODE TO DEPARTMENT APD CAIRO.

4. WHILE THIS CODE OF HONOR WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION, THE INFORMATION MINISTERS WERE TREATED TO AN EXAMPLE OF THE REALITIES OF INTER-ARAB RELATIONS. LIBYAN PARTICIPANTS LAUNCHED INTO A VIGOROUS ATTACK OF EGYPT AND DEMANDED THAT THEIR TUNISIAN HOSTS GIVE THEM FULL MEDIA COVERAGE. GOT SOURCE TOLD US THAT LIBYAN DEMAND WAS REFUSED AND TUNISIANS, WITH HELP OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OTHER ARABS, DEFUSED EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN ANIMOSITY AND GOT CONFERENCE BACK TO ITS AGENDA.

5. GOT PRESS AGENCY CHIEF MAHMOUD TRIKI TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THIS INFORMATION MINISTERS' CONFERENCE HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY UNDISTINGUISHED. HE CHARACTERIZED RELATIONS AMONG ARAB LEAGUE MEMBERS IN REALM OF INFORMATION AS PLAGUED BY NATIONAL RIVALRIES AND HYPERBOLIC ANIMOSITIES AND SAW LITTLE CHANCE THAT A COMMON EFFORT IN THIS AREA COULD BE DEVELOPED OR SUSTAINED. HE CALLED THE DRAFT CODE OF HONOR A MEAINLESS EXERCISE AND PREDICTED THAT LITTLE ATTENTION WILL BE PAID TO IT AFTER ITS FORMAL ADOPTION.
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